

TOWN OF LA POINTE

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2012

AT 5:00 PM AT TOWN HALL

Present: Nick Nelson, Jim Patterson, Greg Nelson, Ham Ross, Larry Whalen
Staff present: Pete Clark, Keith Sowl, Cindy Dalzell
Public Present: Jim Peters, Dick Coleman, Dave Thomas, Burke Henry, Evan Erickson

I. Called to order at 5:02 PM

II. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss & review the 2013 budget.

Greg Nelson began by reading the purpose of the meeting and asking for requests for public comment. Hearing none, he asked Town Administrator Pete Clark to begin.

Nick Nelson refers to the item on EMS wages and asks that the Board defer to Cindy Dalzell.

Cindy Dalzell stated that an increase in the hours spent by the Director have resulted in a request for a higher wage. She added that she does not see the Director's hours decreasing any time soon.

Greg Nelson asked if the increase requested was equal for all officers.

Cindy Dalzell replied that the Director has more to do [State & local council requirements], and that her understanding is that the other officers do not spend as much time at their jobs.

Nick Nelson added that in the beginning, it was not clear which officers would be spending what amounts of time, but that over the last year, the hours of each has stabilized. He reiterated that he does not need a raise.

Next, the Board turned its attention to the Roads budget:

Greg Nelson asked Town Foreman Keith Sowl if there is any timeline of capital outlay expenditures.

Sowl replied that the answer to that is mostly up to the contractor's billing. The Town crew will not be doing much more this year. He added that as of November 7, 2012, the expenditures were \$154,338. The well & the electricity

still has to be paid for, as well as a boardwalk materials bid that Sowl would like permission to accept on behalf of the Town. [approximately \$14,000] The project will also need another \$6000 for handicap accessibility. [\$48,000 has been provided in grant money.]

Greg Nelson pointed out that if the budgeted money is not spent, it will be rolled over into the Big Bay Town Park designated fund.

Keith Sowl stated that Jim Price has given verbal permission for the thermal envelope for the comfort station/shower building.

Nick Nelson asked if this includes a cost increase.

Pete Clark replied that Scott Sandor had told him there would be an additional \$25,000 to \$35,000 needed. [This uses the same footprint & plumbing.]

Ham Ross asked if this is solid block construction.

Sowl replied that he thought the plan is to put in some insulation. He added that he has used the grant funding as his guide in the planning. Also, he stated that the water line is about half done at a cost of \$3800. [The grant written for the well was for \$25,000; the well will be done, according to Sowl, for a total of less than \$10,000.] He added that Chequamegon Bay Engineering was way off on their estimates.

Moving on to other projects, Sowl said that he will likely not to the Old Fort Rd./storm sewer project.

Greg Nelson said that the Griggs Approach permit and grant both have deadlines, and that he feels the town should do these before both expire.

Keith Sowl stated that he had been told by John Spangberg of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that the Town would be unlikely to get an extension on the permit.

Sowl continued by saying that he is not asking for new equipment this year and he defers to the Plan Commission in this regard.

Greg Nelson asked Sowl about the proposed purchase of a plasma cutter.

Sowl replied that the item has been in his budget request for two years.

Greg Nelson asked if the Town would be bringing salt over on the ferry and mixing it with sand.

Sowl replied yes.

Ham Ross asked if the cost of a structure for storing the salt would be about the same as the cost of a structure for storing fire wood.

Sowl replied: \$5000

Nick Nelson returned to the subject of the Big Bay Town Park Improvement Plan and asked the cost of the improvements to the inland side of the road; in other words, how are the grants laid out.

Sowl replied that all the grant money has been blended together.

Nelson stated that he is trying to understand the breakdown.

Sowl replied that much of the inland side would have been done using Town labor for the inland portion of the match; this could have an impact on the grants.

Nick Nelson asked how much of the expense of the inland side of the project comes out of the Town budget and how much comes out of grants.

Sowl replied that it is not possible to answer that.

Ham Ross asked what is saved if nothing is done on the inland side.

Greg Nelson asked what rate would be charged for RV's to camp.

Sowl replied that since all of them will have electricity, they would be \$25 a day. Right now there are no electrical sites.

Ham Ross pointed out that if the Town does not complete the project, revenue will suffer.

Sowl stated that those are the sites that would make the money, and that right now it's hard to predict how revenue would be affected.

Greg Nelson stated that he feels the Town should proceed, that the revenue will justify the project over time.

Pete Clark added that none of the grants lend themselves to breaking out the two sides of the road: the funds are co-mingled. He also stated that if the Town changes the character of the project, it may run the risk of having to refund some of the grant money. According to Clark, Ed Slaminiski [WI DNR] says that the elements of a plan are weighted: if you change those things, the grants are left up in the air.

Greg Nelson asked Sowl if a permit was needed for the culvert at Big Bay Town Park.

Sowl replied: no, it's not a wetland.

Greg Nelson/Keith Sowl stated that all permits are being held up due to the Section 106 [Corps of Engineers involvement due to possible Ojibwe sacred sites and/or artifacts], and that the Town must get through it.

Pete Clark stated that he has been told that it will be resolved by March, 2013, and that the project can still be finished on time.

Sowl added that with decent weather, the project can be completed by July 4, 2013.

Clark added that if it is completed on time, the Town would gain an additional \$75,000 from the WI DNR.

Greg Nelson asked if this had been passed along to the Island's legislators.

Clark replied that it certainly will be.

The Board then gave its attention to the Griggs Approach project:

Greg Nelson stated that the Board needs to make a decision regarding this project.

Ham Ross stated that he favors proceeding with the project and financing it if necessary.

Sowl added that [since the work cannot begin till spring] it would be possible to forget about it if there is not ice road again this year. He added that the cost of mats for the approach is much less than the cost of the coffer dam needed to do the improvement any other way.

Ross stated that mats are an obvious solution.

Pete Clark stated that there is variability in the cost of engineering for that: the grant is for \$129,000 plus Town labor of \$2000.

Burke Henry pointed out that over the last decade the cost of Big Bay Town Park have increased by a factor of three while the rates have increased by only a factor of two. He asked if there is a plan for these "slopes to intersect."

Ham Ross sated that this may be a call to raise the rates at the Park.

Greg Nelson added that that is what he envisioned: the reservation system has already increased revenue, and with the other 22 sites, the end will justify the means.

Sowl added that the slopes will not intersect till the whole project is done. Nick Nelsons stated that he feels that it is unfortunate that the Town Park has been turned into a revenue source.

Greg Nelson responds that the Big Bay Improvement Plan was undertaken in response to complaints about the condition of facilities at the Park.

Nick Nelson replies that he is aware of the complaints, but that the Town Plan Commission voted against this project due to its impact.

Burke Henry stated that he feels he should not pay property taxes for someone from Minneapolis to come to the Island to camp.

Ham Ross pointed out that we are a “self-proclaimed tourist attraction.”

Greg Nelson stated that all the Board can do is make a decision that is based on what is best for the public good.

Greg Nelson then asked Pete Clark to list his suggested budget cuts:

Budget requests cut as follows:

- \$41,465 the Old Fort Rd. project
- \$30,250 Library Capital Outlay
- \$15,288 Library Maintenance
- \$10,000 Town Plan Commission legal expenses
- \$10,000 Rice St. Extension project
- \$7000 Library books
- \$5000 Town Plan Commission Ordinance rewrite
- \$2500 ad Hoc Committee on Local Foods

Designated Funds cut as follows:

- \$50,000 Highway equipment
- \$7000 Firefighters' Benevolent Fund
- \$10,000 EMT Training
- \$10,000 Ambulance Equipment
- \$2000 Library General Fund
- \$4000 Squad Car
- \$2000 Law
- \$12,3000 Office Equipment (no new software)

Jim Patterson asked if the designated fund for the squad car is part of the Ashland County Inter-municipal Agreement.

Pete Clark replied: that's on one car.

Ham Ross disagreed with the library cuts.

Pete Clark replied that the Library has designated funds that can be accessed; the Town is saying, "Use what you have." These are cuts for this revenue year.

Ham Ross restates his objection to cutting library book funding.

Jim Patterson agreed with returning some money for library acquisitions.

Pete Clark suggested moving \$6600 of the Airport's designated funds to the general fund.

Greg Nelson added that development of the Light Industrial Zone could wait a year.

Evan Erickson stated that he thinks there is still one lot available for lease at the Industrial Zone.

Greg Nelson returned to the Griggs Approach project and asks the will of the Board.

Ham Ross reiterates that the Town has the option to borrow for that project.

Greg Nelson asked if the new roof project at the Emergency Services Building & the Clinic can be delayed.

Dave Thomas commented on how much money the Town could save by reducing wages.

Ham Ross said that there will be no wage reduction for Town employees.

Greg Nelson proposes eliminating the plasma cutter from the Roads budget.

The Board next turned its attention to wages for 2013.

Greg Nelson pointed out the 128% increase in wages for the Ambulance Service and the increase in Library wages. He pointed that he understands that the new wage for the Library is in line with other libraries in the area.

Jim Patterson/Ham Ross suggested raising the Library wage over four years.
[Consensus agreement]

Greg Nelson suggested giving a cost of living increase to Town employees [based on the consumer price index] and a merit raise to Pete Clark.

Pete Clark declined any raise.

III. Adjournment at 7:33 PM

Submitted by Patty Hobin, Town Clerk
Approved as submitted on 12/11/12
Patty Hobin, Town Clerk